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State Deploys Additional Resources to Support Asylum Seeker Response

At request of City of Chicago, State temporarily stands up hotel rooms for up to 200 new arrivals to respond to recent influx

CHICAGO—In response to a recent influx of asylum seeker arrivals from Texas and at the request of the City of Chicago, the State is temporarily standing up hotel rooms to safely house families. This comes as Governor Abbott of Texas has sent an unprecedented number of asylum seekers to Illinois in recent days – with no coordination or advanced notice.

The State made approximately 30 hotel rooms available Saturday night with the remaining hotel rooms for up to 200 people coming online today. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) is working closely with the City of Chicago to identify hotel spaces, and the City is providing transportation. Those in hotels will be moved to a former CVS in Little Village when construction of that shelter is completed in January. Additional shelter sites are being explored and work is underway.

“IDHS continues to welcome our new neighbors with support services and assistance with work-permit applications, which will ultimately hasten their journey to self-sufficiency,” **said Dulce Quintero, IDHS Secretary Designate.**

Funding for the hotels will come from the additional \$160 million Governor Pritzker announced in November to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis presented by the arrival of over 30,000 asylum seekers from the U.S. Southern Border.

These investments build on \$478 million in State funding that has been provided or committed to the asylum seeker response over Fiscal Years 2023 and 2024. This includes direct funding to the City of Chicago and other municipalities assisting asylum seekers as well as substantial State funding for shelter, food, medical care, rental assistance, and wraparound casework and services.



Since the additional investment and plans announced last month, the State has meaningfully addressed bottlenecks and backlogs in providing support to asylum seekers, which is contributing to a decrease in individuals sleeping outside police stations and increases in individuals resettling in independent community housing.

This includes more than 11 full-time staff who welcome new arrivals, provide emergency food and winter clothing, and help identify individuals who are seeking a final destination other than Illinois or who have sponsors in Illinois and don't require shelter. Through this support, over 2,000 individuals have been reunited with family or friends rather than entering the shelter system.

In partnership with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago and New Life Centers, the State has seen a 58% increase in the number of rental assistance applications approved since October, with corresponding increases in move-outs.

The State has also worked with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights to expand culturally competent case management services to an additional 16,500 asylum seekers. Through this expansion, full network coverage is expected by early January.

The State has led efforts to move asylum seekers currently in shelter through the federal TPS and EAD work-permit processes. This will allow asylum seekers to gain employment and achieve self-sufficiency, thereby alleviating the strain on State resources. In partnership with The Resurrection Project, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and the City of Chicago, the State has stood up large-scale workshops with legal aid providers and pro-bono attorneys to facilitate the application process.

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